

Tom's List of Poor Choices for Screening

These are used for screening frequently in San Diego,
but Tom thinks they should be avoided.

Botanical Name	Common Name (if any)	Why not use it for screening?
<i>Acacia latifolia</i>	Sydney Golden Wattle	Short lived, high pollen production. Fast growing, but coarse.
<i>Bambusa oldhamii</i>	Clumping Timber Bamboo	Grows to 100', may be too large and increase maintenance costs if screening buildings smaller than two stories. Clump needs about 100 sq. ft. of ground space.
<i>Cupressocyparis leylandii</i>	Leyland Cypress	A large evergreen, 30' or so, highly susceptible to a canker which can kill the tree prematurely.
<i>Cupressus sempervirens</i> 'Glauc'	Italian Cypress	Tall, narrow evergreen. Grows to 100', too large in most situations.
<i>Eucalyptus citriodora</i>	Lemon-scented Gum	80' tree, smooth trunk, sometimes 30' before the first branch, therefore provides little screening below 30'. Produces lots of debris, weak wood.
<i>Eucalyptus globulus</i>	Blue Gum	80' tree, too large for most residential lots. Produces lots of debris, weak wood. Provides little screening low.
<i>Ficus benjamina</i>	Weeping Fig	Grows too large – 40'-50', surface root system can crack patios, constant drop of foliage and fruit, dense canopy needs regular thinning, adding to maintenance costs.
<i>Ficus elastica variegata</i>	Variegated Rubber Tree	Grows too large – 40'-50', surface root system can crack patios, constant drop of large leaves, dense canopy needs regular thinning, adding to maintenance costs.
<i>Ficus nitida</i>	Indian Laurel Fig	Grows too large – 40'-50', surface root system can crack patios, constant drop of foliage and fruit, dense canopy needs regular thinning, adding to maintenance costs.
<i>Ficus retusa</i>	Banyan Tree, Taiwan Ficus	Grows too large – 40'-50', surface root system can crack patios, constant drop of foliage and fruit, dense canopy needs regular thinning, adding to maintenance costs.
<i>Ficus rubignosa</i>	Rusty Leaf Fig	Grows too large – 40'-50', surface root system can crack patios, constant drop of foliage and fruit, dense canopy needs regular thinning, adding to maintenance costs.

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<i>Hibiscus rosa-sinensis</i>	Tropical Hibiscus, Chinese Hibiscus	Best when given lots of air circulation; to minimize giant whitefly problem, not grown dense. Has large leaves which shear poorly, a pruning method which also cuts off the terminal blooms.
<i>Melaleuca quinquenervia</i>	Paperbark Tree	40' tall, narrow form, water greedy, can lift patios and walks, lots of surface roots. Smaller <i>Melaleuca</i> species are better choices.
<i>Metrosiderous excelsus</i>	New Zealand Christmas Tree	Great tree, but too large in most situations – grows to 40'
<i>Nerium oleander</i>	Oleander	Most grow 15-20' tall and as wide. Has poisonous sap. Blooms at the tips. Great for screening if given enough room to be allowed to grow without any pruning. Narrow shearing increases maintenance, exposure to sap, and limits bloom
<i>Photinia faseri</i>	Photinia, Red-tip Photinia	Grows to 20', highly susceptible to fungus spotting, new growth is reddish and showy, but does better in the desert with lots of heat. Has a tendency to be top heavy and thin at the bottom.
<i>Pittosporum undulatum</i>	Victorian Box	Too large in most settings, 40' tall and as wide, dense crown needs regular thinning. Great fragrance in the spring. Can be weedy.
<i>Podocarpus gracilior</i>	Fern Pine	Too large in most settings, 50' tall and as wide, dense crown needs regular thinning. Better smaller <i>Podocarpus</i> are available.
<i>Schefflera actinophylla</i> (syn. <i>Brassaia actinophylla</i>)	Umbrella Tree, Octopus Tree	25' tall tropical tree, top heavy, thin at bottom. <i>Tupidanthus</i> or Dwarf <i>Schefflera</i> are good substitutes.
<i>Syzygium paniculatum</i>	Brush Cherry	The common <i>Eugenia</i> , probably the most popular screen for 100 years, recently has had a problem with an insect (a psyllid.) Grows tall and narrow, but needs constant shearing to keep below its natural 40' height.
<i>Tecomaria capensis</i>	Cape Honeysuckle	A gangly shrub, needs constant work to keep in check as a screen, better when grown as a free form shrub on a large bank.
<i>Thuja occidentalis</i>	Arborvitae	10' or more in height, 6' around. Great if given enough room as to never need pruning. To keep any narrower adds a lot to maintenance.
<i>Xylosma congestum</i>	Shiny xylosma	Can grow to 20', very susceptible to whitefly when sheared. Has thorns, but no flowers or fruit. Not bad as a small tree if well pruned.